

The Dark Earth and the Light Sky by Nick Dear

Deep in the Hampshire countryside Edward Thomas, disaffected husband, exhausted father and tormented writer, scrapes a living. In 1913 he meets American poet Robert Frost and everything changes. As their friendship blossoms Edward writes, emerging from his cocoon of self-doubt into one of the most influential poets of the 20th century. But he makes the drastic decision to enlist, confounding his friends and family. Four years after their first meeting, Frost was on his way to becoming a great American poet, and Thomas was dead. Nick Dear's play explores the enigma of Edward Thomas through the eyes of those who loved him best. The play premiered at the Almeida Theatre in November 2012, earning four star reviews. It demands a fluid, impressionistic treatment with an imaginative set, lighting and beautiful sound plot.

Performances 20 – 25 May 2019 with a matinee on 25 May

Social Reading Tuesday 5th March 2019 at 8pm in the Rehearsal Room

Audition Tuesday 12th March 2019 at 8pm in the Rehearsal Room

Rehearsals start 2nd April 2019

Director Anne Gregory annegregory86@gmail.com

PA

E mail Anne if you wish to audition, but cannot attend on 12th March.

Scripts available from Anne.

CHARACTERS AND AUDITION PIECES

Edward Thomas (Born 3/3/1878 Died 9/4/1917) Scenes from 1910 to 1917



Wiry and intense. Was 21 when Helen became pregnant with their first child. He suffered acute, and occasionally suicidal, depressions and frequently found family life intolerable: extended walks through the English countryside not only provided him with material for his writing but also represented freedom from stifling domesticity.

Scene 3, pages 8 and 9 (with Helen); Scene 10, pages 40 to 45 (with Eleanor);

Scene 27, pages 89 to 93 (with Robert); Scene 28, page 94.

Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965) Scenes from 1914 to 1917



Eleanor Farjeon was a British author of children's stories and plays, poetry, biography, history and satire. She lived much of her life among the literary and theatrical circles of London, and her friends included D. H. Lawrence, Walter de la Mare and Robert Frost. Short and a bit round, shy, giggly, wearing rimless glasses, a summery dress and a floppy hat. She is socially a cut above the Thomases.

Scene 10, pages 40 to 45 (with Edward); Scene 16, page 58; Scene 24, pages 76 to 81 (with Helen).

Philip Thomas Scenes 1911 and 1915 (Born circa 1855) Welsh accent needed (Tredegar)

Edward's father. A fastidious man in a crisp suit with a wing-collar.

Scene 2, pages 4 to 8 and Scene 19, pages 65 to 70.

Robert Frost (Born 26/3/1874 Died 29/1/1963) Scenes from 1913 to 1928

An American poet whose work was initially published in England before it was published in America. Blond-haired, blue-eyed and handsome.



Scene 25, pages 81 to 86 (with Helen). Scene 27, pages 89 to 93 (with Edward).

Helen Thomas (Born 11/7/1877 Died 1967) Scenes from 1910 to 1928

Shy at first because Edward was shy, Helen then sought him out, and, in time, they became lovers united by their love of poetry and the beauty of the English countryside. When Helen Noble became pregnant, Edward Thomas married her, and their first child, a son, was born in 1900. Statuesque. Sun tanned.



Scene 1, pages 3 and 4 (with Edward); Scene 3, pages 8 and 9 (with Edward);

Scene 24, pages 76 to 81 (with Eleanor); Scene 25, pages 81 to 86 (with Robert).

Arnold Bott, a gamekeeper One scene in 1914 (this actor will also play Major Lushington)

Gloucester accent needed – a fat and ruddy countryman.

Pages 21/22

Major Franklin Lushington One scene in March 1917

Well spoken. High status. He is slightly younger than Edward, and his CO.

Scene 21, pages 71, 72 and 73.